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***Visit of Canadian Ambassador Gilbert  
Parent to an IDRC project***

**Diane Hardy**

(March 5, 2002)

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Our colleague Prabha Sethuraman informs us that H.E. Mr. Gilbert Parent, Canadian Ambassador for the Environment, Ms Julie Rekai Rickert, Special Advisor, and Roger Finan visited the IDRC project "Impact of ICTs on Rural Population-India" implemented by the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF). On this occasion, Mr Parent under the auspices of the Hindu Media Resource Centre of MSSRF delivered a lecture on "Canada's Environmental Priorities".

After Ambassador Parent's lecture, Prof Swaminathan commented that " You explained complex issues with great lucidity. I am confident that you will make much difference at the Johannesburg Summit, since you combine humanism with political realism."

To read Ambassador Parent's speech, please click [here](#).

To take a look at pictures on this visit please click [here](#).

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## ***Visite de l'ambassadeur canadien Gilbert Parent sur les lieux d'un projet du CRDI***

**Diane Hardy**

(5 mars 2002)

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Notre collègue Prabha Sethuraman nous informe que S.E. M. Gilbert Parent, ambassadeur canadien à l'environnement, Mme Julie Rekaï Rickert, conseillère spéciale, et Roger Finan se sont rendus sur les lieux du projet du CRDI « Impact des TIC sur la population rurale (Inde) » exécuté par la M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF). À cette occasion, M. Parent, sous les auspices du Centre de ressources des médias hindous de la MSSRF, a fait un exposé sur les « Priorités environnementales du Canada ».

Au terme de l'intervention de l'ambassadeur Parent, le Prof Swaminathan a fait le commentaire suivant : « Vous avez expliqué des questions complexes avec une grande clarté. Je suis convaincu que vous ferez une grande différence au Sommet de Johannesburg car vous alliez l'humanisme et le réalisme politique ».

Pour lire le discours de l'ambassadeur Parent, veuillez cliquer [ici](#).

Pour regarder les photos de cette visite, cliquez sur ce [lien](#).

**"Canada's Environmental Priorities"**  
**A lecture by H.E. Gilbert Parent, Canadian Ambassador for the Environment,**  
**at the Hindu Media Resource Centre of M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation**  
**(MSSRF)**

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THE THREE ISSUES THAT I WILL BE DISCUSSING THIS AFTERNOON ARE AT THE TOP OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT'S GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA.

1. CLIMATE CHANGE.
2. THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME.
3. AND THE ROAD TO JOHANNESBURG.

I WILL TALK BRIEFLY ABOUT ALL THREE AND I AM, OF COURSE, PREPARED TO ANSWER ANY OF YOUR QUESTIONS IN THE Q & A SESSION THAT WILL FOLLOW.

FIRST, THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS THE SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS THAT THE WORLD'S CLIMATE IS CHANGING AND THAT IT IS DOING SO AT AN UNPRECEDENTED RATE.

WITHOUT ACTION, THE LONG TERM CONSEQUENCES WILL BE HIGHLY NEGATIVE, PARTICULARLY FOR CANADA.

ON THESE FACTS, THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE WORLD'S LEADING CLIMATE SCIENTISTS ARE IN AGREEMENT.

I SAID THE EFFECTS WILL BE PARTICULARLY NEGATIVE FOR CANADA. THE EFFECTS WILL BE MORE MARKED HERE THAN IN MANY OTHER COUNTRIES BECAUSE OF OUR NORTHERN LATITUDE. THE IMPACT ON OUR AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY, OUR FISHING STOCKS, OUR WATER SUPPLIES AND MANY OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR CURRENT WAY OF LIFE WILL BE SIGNIFICANT.

THIS PAST SUMMER, POLITICAL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED IN BONN BY 178 NATIONS ON THE PRIMARY RULES FOR IMPLEMENTING GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE REDUCTIONS UNDER THE KYOTO PROTOCOL.

AND JUST A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO WE WERE ABLE TO REACH A FINAL AGREEMENT IN MARRAKECH ON CRUCIAL LEGAL AND TECHNICAL DETAILS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KYOTO PROTOCOL.

CANADA IS VERY PLEASED WITH THE AGREEMENT REACHED IN MARRAKECH. IT IS A

VICTORY FOR THE PLANET AND SIGNALS THE END OF FOUR YEARS OF NEGOTIATING THAT CULMINATED IN THREE INTERNATIONAL HIGH-STAKES NEGOTIATING SESSIONS ?IN THE HAGUE, BONN AND MARRAKECH ? OVER A 12 MONTH PERIOD.

IN MARRAKECH, THE INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE RULES TO IMPLEMENT THE KYOTO PROTOCOL CAME TO A CONCLUSION.

A NEW CHAPTER IN ITS HISTORY NOW BEGINS FOCUSING ON RATIFICATION OF THE PROTOCOL BY THE PARTIES AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

THE MARRAKECH DEAL IS A GOOD DEAL FOR THE WORLD. FIRST OF ALL, IT IS COMPREHENSIVE SINCE IT CONSIDERS BOTH INDUSTRIAL SOURCES OF GREENHOUSE GASES AS WELL AS CARBON SINKS. ALSO, THE BONN AGREEMENT GIVES COUNTRIES THE FLEXIBILITY THEY NEED TO ACHIEVE THEIR KYOTO TARGETS IN A COST-EFFECTIVE WAY. IT ALLOWS FOR PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THROUGH THE CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM AND JOINT IMPLEMENTATION. THE CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM ALLOWS COUNTRIES WITH KYOTO TARGETS, AND THEIR COMPANIES, TO GENERATE CARBON CREDITS BY INVESTING IN EMISSIONS REDUCTION PROJECTS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. JOINT IMPLEMENTATION DOES THE SAME FOR ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION. THE THIRD KYOTO MECHANISM IS INTERNATIONAL EMISSIONS TRADING, WHICH ALLOWS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION AND THEIR COMPANIES TO TRADE EMISSIONS CREDITS AMONG THEMSELVES. THE BONN AGREEMENT ADDRESSES CAPACITY ISSUES.

FURTHER, IT IS AN ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENT THAT IS BASED LARGELY ON FINDING MARKET MECHANISMS AS SOLUTIONS.

PERHAPS MORE THAN ANY PREVIOUS INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT, IT IS ONE WHOSE BENEFITS WILL LARGELY BE INVISIBLE TO THIS GENERATION, BUT OF VAST BENEFIT TO GENERATIONS YET UNBORN.

THE START OF THE FIRST COMMITMENT PERIOD UNDER THE KYOTO PROTOCOL IS ONLY SIX YEARS AWAY AND IMPORTANT DECISIONS MUST BE MADE SO THAT GOVERNMENTS CAN ACHIEVE THEIR EMISSION REDUCTION TARGETS. WHILE IT IS HIGHLY IMPROBABLE THAT THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION WILL RETURN THE UNITED STATES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL, THE ADMINISTRATION HAS ALREADY COMMITTED TO AN AGENDA FOCUSED ON SCIENCE RESEARCH, NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND WORKING WITH DEVELOPING NATIONS.

WHEN OUR ENVIRONMENT MINISTER, DAVID ANDERSON, MET WITH U.S. ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR CHRISTIE TODD WHITMAN IN OCTOBER, HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY HER ASSURANCES THAT THE U.S. CABINET IS CONTINUING WORK ON A GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION PLAN THAT MAKES SENSE FOR US, AND, WE BELIEVE, FOR OTHER COUNTRIES.”

MANY OF THE PROCESSES USED TO ARRIVE AT RECENT DECISIONS UNDER THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE HIGHLIGHT THE NEED TO IMPROVE INTERNATIONAL DECISION-MAKING ON THE ENVIRONMENT. WE WERE LUCKY TO HAVE ACHIEVED SUCCESS IN BONN AND MARRAKECH, AFTER THE FAILURE AT THE HAGUE. YET BOTH BONN AND MARRAKECH WERE IN DOUBT UP TO VERY LATE IN THE

NEGOTIATING PROCESS. IT IS NOT A GOOD PROCESS  
AND IT IS ONE THAT CANADA IS DETERMINED TO IMPROVE.

LET ME NOW SWITCH TO INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE.

THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMME WAS CREATED AS A RESULT OF THE 1972 STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE, AT THE OUTSET OF THE MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT. IN THE INTERVENING THIRTY YEARS, MUCH WORK HAS BEEN DONE, BUT WE HAVE NOW REACHED THE IRONIC STAGE AT WHICH UNEP IS VIRTUALLY THE VICTIM OF ITS OWN SUCCESS.

UNEP WAS NOT CONCEIVED AS A FULL AGENCY OF THE UNITED NATIONS SUCH AS UNESCO OR THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. UNEP DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER AND AUTHORITY NOR THE FINANCIAL WHEREWITHAL THAT THOSE OTHER INSTITUTIONS POSSESS. TODAY WE FACE THE REALIZATION THAT UNEP HAS OUTGROWN ITS CLOTHES. THE NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS, LAWS, AGREEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES DEALING WITH GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES HAS GROWN TOPSY?TURVY. THERE ARE NOW A BEWILDERING VARIETY OF AUTONOMOUS SECRETARIATS TO MANAGE AND OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VARIOUS AGREEMENTS THAT GOVERNMENTS HAVE NEGOTIATED.

WE NEED TO TAKE A FRESH LOOK AT THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME. WE NEED TO LOOK AT INTEGRATING OUR GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS MORE EFFECTIVELY. WE NEED TO DO THAT IN ORDER TO ADDRESS BOTH THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZATION. WE NEED TO DO IT IN ORDER TO MEET THE OPPORTUNITIES AND THE CHALLENGES OF RAPIDLY INCREASING URBANIZATION. WE NEED TO DO IT IN ORDER TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH, TO TACKLE DISEASE AND TO PROVIDE CLEAN WATER, FRESH AIR AND SUFFICIENT FOOD FOR PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. WHAT WE NEED TO DO, IN SHORT, IS TURN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO A REALITY.

AS OUR EFFORTS PROCEED, ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE MUST BE CONSIDERED WITHIN THE BROADER CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE OVERALL REVITALIZATION AND STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY REALIZED LONG AGO THAT MULTILATERALISM WAS ESSENTIAL TO PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT. TODAY, HUNDREDS OF AGREEMENTS AND COOPERATION ARRANGEMENTS EXIST. THEY CONSTITUTE A BODY OF INTERNATIONAL LAW THAT, IN THEORY, GOVERNS COUNTRIES DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FACILITATING COOPERATION AND SOUND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT WITHIN AND ACROSS BORDERS. YET THERE HAS BEEN MINIMAL EFFORT TO TAKE STOCK OF CURRENT MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND LITTLE CONSIDERATION OF HOW THE "NEXT GENERATION" OF MULTILATERAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS MIGHT EMERGE. THIS IS ESSENTIAL.

MANY OF THE PROCESSES USED TO ARRIVE AT RECENT DECISIONS UNDER THE FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR CLIMATE CHANGE HIGHLIGHT THE NEED TO IMPROVE INTERNATIONAL DECISION?MAKING ON THE ENVIRONMENT. CANADA IS DETERMINED TO IMPROVE THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, INCLUDING IN ONGOING DISCUSSIONS LED

BY UNEP.

THE RENEWED INTEGRATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE NEXT ROUND OF TRADE TALKS ACHIEVED IN DOHA IN NOVEMBER BODES WELL; IT WILL MAKE GLOBALIZATION WORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT TOO. CANADIANS UNDERSTAND THE NECESSITY AND WISDOM OF BILATERAL, MULTILATERAL AND GLOBAL EFFORTS TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER.

IN JUST EIGHT MONTHS, THE LEADERS OF OUR PLANET WILL MEET IN JOHANNESBURG FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

THEY WILL GATHER TO ACT TOGETHER ON VITAL ISSUES:

1. THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE HEALTH OF THE WORLD'S CHILDREN.
2. THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR ALL.

CANADA WILL FOCUS OUR PREPARATORY EFFORTS TO THE WORLD SUMMIT ON FIVE BROAD THEMES.

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT. INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES. STEWARDSHIP AND CONSERVATION. AND INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE. IN MY EXPERIENCE, WHEN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ARE FRAMED IN WIN/LOSS OR ZERO SUM, ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES ALL TOO OFTEN LOSE.

WE MUST REACH OUT TO AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE IF WE ARE TO ACHIEVE SECRETARY GENERAL KOFI ANNAN'S GOAL OF TURNING THE ABSTRACT CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT "INTO A DAILY REALITY FOR ALL THE WORLD'S PEOPLE'.

WE NEED TO MAKE THE FORCE OF GLOBALIZATION WORK FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, WORK FOR THE POOR, WORK FOR THE SOUTH. IF WE ARE TO MAKE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT RELEVANT FOR EVERYONE, WE NEED STRAIGHTFORWARD PRINCIPLES, PRAGMATIC POLICIES AND PRACTICAL ACTIONS.

AND THAT MEANS THAT WE MUST WORK TOGETHER IN THE RUN-UP TO THE WORLD SUMMIT.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, CANADA HOSTED THE FIRST-EVER MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE AMERICAS IN MONTREAL. THAT WILL BE FOLLOWED UP THIS SPRING IN OTTAWA WITH THE FIRST JOINT MEETING OF THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS OF THE AMERICAS.

SHORTLY THEREAFTER, IN APRIL, CANADA WILL WELCOME ITS G-8 COUNTERPARTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMISSIONER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO BANFF IN ALBERTA. TWO MONTHS LATER, PRIME MINISTER CHRE'TIEN WILL HOST THE G-8 AT KANANASKIS, ALSO IN ALBERTA. G-8 LEADERS HAVE PLACED A PRIORITY ON ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION AROUND THE WORLD, BUT MOST PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA.

THE WORLD SUMMIT AT JOHANNESBURG PROVIDES A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO PULL

THESE THREADS TOGETHER.

IT COMES THIRTY YEARS AFTER STOCKHOLM, FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER THE BRUNDTLAND COMMISSION, AND TEN YEARS AFTER RIO. IN THOSE 30 YEARS THERE HAS BEEN SERIOUS INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS ON THE ENVIRONMENT. BUT THE RESULTS ARE UNEVEN.

ESSENTIALLY, WE HAVE ONLY JUST BEGUN.

EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM KNOWS THAT BUILDING TRUST AND FOSTERING PROGRESS CAN SOMETIMES BE VERY DIFFICULT, EVEN WHEN THE ISSUES AT HAND ARE BEING DISCUSSED BY JUST TWO PARTIES.

THE BUILDING OF TRUST IS THAT MUCH MORE COMPLICATED WHEN 180 COUNTRIES WITH SO? MANY BILATERAL AND REGIONAL TENSIONS COME INTO PLAY.

THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT WE MUST BE DONE AT UNEP.

THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT WE MUST DO IN ALL OUR DOMESTIC, BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD SUMMIT IN JOHANNESBURG.

THE WORLD HAS ALREADY MADE SOME VERY POWERFUL AND TANGIBLE PROGRESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN JUST THIRTY YEARS.

THAT RECORD OF SUCCESS HAS OCCURRED IN BARELY ONE GENERATION.

IT HAS, IN LARGE PART, OCCURRED DURING MY ADULT LIFE.

THAT RECORD SHOULD SPUR US ON TO FURTHER SUCCESSES.

TOGETHER, THE WORLD HAS MOVED ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES FROM A LUXURY ? A COSMETIC ADD?ON TO THE SERIOUS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AGENDAS ? TO THE POINT WHERE THOSE ISSUES NOW ATTRACT THE ATTENTION AND IMAGINATION OF HUMANITY AS CENTRAL TO THE LONG TERM SUCCESS OF THOSE SAME ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AGENDAS.

THERE WILL, OF COURSE, BE DISAGREEMENTS AND DEBATES.

WE MUST DO OUR ABSOLUTE LEVEL BEST TO REACH AGREEMENT AT THE WORLD SUMMIT.

WE MUST TURN HOPEFUL WORDS OF AGREEMENT INTO SIGNIFICANT ACTS OF PROGRESS.

WE MUST AGREE ON HOW TO SPEED UP IMPLEMENTATION AND TURN THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO A PRACTICAL REALITY. AND IF WE SUCCEED, WE CAN GIVE OUR CHILDREN THE GREATEST GIFT:

A WORLD ATTUNED TO THE NEEDS OF THE LESS FORTUNATE.

A WORLD WHERE CLEAN AIR AND CLEAN WATER ARE BASIC RIGHTS.

AND A WORLD WHERE SECURITY MEANS MUCH MORE THAN THE ABSENCE OF  
CONFRONTATION.

WE OWE THAT TO THE FUTURE OF OUR PLANET.

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sur les lieux d'un projet du CRDI**











































